United Nations S/PRST/2015/6

Security Council

Distr.: General
18 February 2015

Original: English

Statement by the President of the Security Council

At the 7388th meeting of the Security Council, held on 18 February 2015, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in Burundi", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"In accordance with Security Council resolution 2137 (2014), the mandate of the United Nations Office in Burundi (BNUB) terminated on 31 December 2014. The Security Council commends the continued contribution of BNUB to the peace, democracy and stability of Burundi in these last four years. The Security Council commends the role played by Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, in this regard, notably in the facilitation of dialogue between political actors in Burundi. The Security Council welcomes the Secretary-General's final report on BNUB (S/2015/36).

"The Security Council welcomes the significant progress made by Burundi since the adoption of the Arusha Agreement in 2000, notably in the restoration of security and stability in the country. The Council notes that the spirit of Arusha helped to sustain almost a decade of peace in Burundi. The Security Council welcomes Burundi's contribution and active participation to United Nations and African Union peacekeeping operations, especially in Somalia and Central African Republic.

"The Security Council notes that there remain challenges to overcome to ensure that the significant progress is not reversed, especially in the context of the 2015 elections. The Security Council stresses, in this regard, the crucial need for a free, transparent, credible, inclusive and peaceful electoral process in 2015 and sustained attention to such a process. The Council welcomes continued engagement by international and regional partners, including the African Union, in support of the reform agenda and the electoral process in Burundi.

"The Security Council expresses its concern regarding the recent events that occurred in the provinces of Cibitoke, strongly condemns such attempts to resort to violence for political means, and stresses the importance of guaranteeing a peaceful electoral process. The Security Council expresses its deep concern at the high number of reported victims resulting from this incident, looks forward to the outcome of an impartial investigation by the

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Government of Burundi, and stresses the need for it to be independent and impartial, led by competent national institutions.

"The Security Council welcomes the unanimous adoption of the Electoral Code in 2014, as well as of the Roadmap for the elections and the signing of the code of conduct for political parties and political actors, which was facilitated by BNUB.

"The Security Council takes note of the engagement of the Government of Burundi to implement the code of conduct for political parties and political actors as well as the Roadmap towards the elections. The Security Council expresses concern with reports of intimidation, harassment, political violence, arbitrary arrest and detention and other curtailments to the enjoyment of the rights of freedom of peaceful assembly and expression. The Security Council encourages the Government of Burundi to make further efforts to ensure a space for all political parties, including from the extra-parliamentary opposition, and to improve dialogue between all political actors, with a view to ensuring a conducive, free and open environment for the run up to the 2015 elections, and further calls upon the Government of Burundi to ensure the full and effective participation of women at all stages of the electoral process.

"The Security Council welcomes the efforts of the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) and emphasizes the importance of guaranteeing the independence and impartiality of the CENI, as well as its provincial and communal organs, and their engagement with all partners to ensure inclusive participation in the electoral process throughout the country to all citizens and candidates.

"The Security Council welcomes recent steps taken by the CENI to reach out to electoral stakeholders and address some of their concerns and stresses that it is critical that the CENI continues to undertake effective measures to strengthen the public's confidence in the electoral process. The Security Council also encourages the opposition to play its part and remain engaged throughout the electoral process and use peaceful and democratic means to address any electoral disputes.

"The Security Council takes note of the Electoral Workshop held by the CENI in Bujumbura on 29 January 2015 with the participation of the Government, political parties, civil society, religious entities as well as international technical and financial partners, to address the reports of significant irregularities during the voter registration process conducted between 24 November and 12 December 2014. The Council encourages the Government of Burundi and the CENI to continue efforts to work with the interested parties to ensure the credibility and inclusivity of the upcoming elections.

"The Security Council welcomes the deployment on 1 January 2015, immediately at the end of BNUB's mandate, of the United Nations Electoral Observation Mission in Burundi (MENUB) under the leadership of Mr. Cassam Uteem as the Special Envoy of the Secretary-general and Head of the Mission. In accordance with its resolution 2137 (2014), the Security Council recalls that this mission has the mandate to follow and report on the electoral process in Burundi, before, during and after the elections, and calls

on the government of Burundi, the CENI and all relevant electoral stakeholders to ensure close cooperation with MENUB in this regard.

"The Security Council notes the efforts made by the Government of Burundi to improve the human rights situation in Burundi and takes note of the reports of a reduction of extrajudicial killings, cases of torture and ill-treatment, as well as politically-motivated acts of violence carried out by youth wings affiliated to political parties, while expressing concern about some recent developments and urging the Government of Burundi to resume the previous trend.

"The Security Council expresses concern for restrictions on freedom of expression and opinion, peaceful assembly and association, as well as continued threats against journalists and representatives of civil society, including those who work on human rights. The Council calls for the Government of Burundi to take all appropriate measures to ensure the exercise of these fundamental freedoms, and to assure the protection of civil society, including those who work on human rights, in order to ensure an inclusive and credible electoral process. The Security Council further expresses its concern about the insufficient progress on the fight against impunity and calls for the Government of Burundi to deploy greater efforts to ensure that all human rights violations and abuses are seriously investigated and that perpetrators are held accountable.

"The Security Council commends the growing role played by the National Human Rights Commission (CNIDH) in leading a national effort to protect human rights and calls on the Burundian authorities to guarantee the Commission's independence.

"The Security Council welcomes the opening of a stand-alone office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Burundi with a comprehensive mandate to monitor and report on human rights violations and abuses and to support the Government of Burundi in upholding its obligations under international human rights law. The Security Council encourages the international community to support the Office, including through providing sufficient resources.

"The Security Council notes that Burundi remains one of the poorest countries in the world and stresses the utmost importance of fighting against poverty. In this regard, the Council urges progress by Burundi towards development and of ongoing economic reforms to enhance macro-economic stability, including the policy on zero tolerance on corruption, and calls for these efforts to include holding accountable individuals that violate the zero tolerance policy on corruption.

"The Security Council emphasizes the need for the United Nations system and the international community, including the international financial institutions and Burundi's development partners, to maintain their support for peace consolidation and long-term development in Burundi. In this regard the Security Council welcomes the Round Table meeting held in Bujumbura on 11 and 12 December 2014, and calls upon the Government of Burundi and international and regional partners to fully implement the mutual commitments made in the meeting's Joint Communique.

"The Security Council welcomes the continued engagement of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, and encourages the continued constructive cooperation between the Government of Burundi and the Peacebuilding Commission, and acknowledging the contribution that the Peacebuilding Fund has made to peacebuilding efforts in Burundi.

"The Security Council reiterates its call on the United Nations Country Team and its component United Nations agencies to scale up their activities and factor them into the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, and urges the Secretary-General to work toward a seamless transition to the Resident Coordinator and United Nations Country Team management model.

"The Security Council emphasizes the need to address the implications of BNUB's departure as identified in the Joint Transition Plan adopted by the Transition Steering Group, in particular in the areas of political dialogue, high-level facilitation and advocacy, as well as human rights. In accordance with its resolution 2137 (2014), the Security Council reiterates its request to MENUB, as may be required, to report to the Secretary-General and the Secretary-General to the Security Council before, during and after the elections, and further reiterates its request to the Secretary-General to report every six months to the Security Council until after the 2015 elections."